



RAC chairs and vice chair meeting 28th February 2013

The LDRAC (Carlos Aldereguia) chaired/the BSRAC wrote the minutes

Reine Johansson, Niki Sporrang and Sally Clink (BSRAC), Juan Manuel Liria and Carlos Aldereguia (LDRAC), Giampaolo Buonfiglio and Rosa Caggiano, (MEDRAC), Niels Wichmann, and Lorna Duguid (NSRAC) Bertie Armstrong, Conor Nolan, Alex Rodriguez (NWWRAC), Iain MacSween and Verena Ohms, (PELRAC), Monica Verbeek (SWWRAC)

1. Welcome, introduction, apologies, adoption of agenda

No comments. Two points were proposed to AOB.

2. Preparation of the meeting with the Commission - a discussion of the agenda points and joint positions. (The two agenda points are: 1. Involvement of the RACs in the preparation of conservation measures and 2. Future role, composition and functioning of future Advisory Councils

Carlos explained that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss mandated positions and to try to find common ground. He asked everyone what they expected from the meeting with the Commission.

NSRAC (Niels Wichmann) said the message to the first point is “yes” to involvement in every way and as much as possible; and to the second point the NSRAC would keep to the written contribution they had sent in. It was important to acknowledge the differences of the RACs, instead of trying to make them all the same, and the budgets should reflect that. He highlighted for example, the work done by the NSRAC on Natura 2000. It was not to start competing with each other, but money could be given to those RACs that need it for translation+interpreting.

NWWRAC (Bertie Armstrong) said the reaction to 1. will depend on what we hear from the COM. Since we don't know the content, we will be listening before taking any conclusion. On point 2. the RAC would also keep to its written contribution as this was a document agreed by all NWWRAC members. It did not want to be railroaded into anything. They were waiting for a read out tomorrow on the process with technical measures and discards and technical measures: all of this is for the RACs to discuss tomorrow.

PELRAC (Iain McSween): reiterated the NSRAC comments. On the conservation issues, the PELRAC now had a preview of the impact of the discard ban – in the first place for the pelagic fleet. So in next six months it will be heavily engaged with the COM in discussing the discard ban for 2014. So it will have a full agenda for discussing with the COM.

BSRAC (Reine Johansson) had no expectations to the meeting tomorrow. The BSRAC has sent in its position and the COM wants to listen to the RACs again about the role and composition of the RACs. He thought the composition of the RACs was one of the main questions for the Commission. Niki Sporrang did not agree. She had sympathy for the COM: the Basic Regulation says very little about the RACs, and the MS and the EP have gone in and added details on the RACs. So the COM might not be able to give much

information right now. Niki wanted it to be clear that civil society is reflected in the RACs – there are issues of representation and the fact that on some RACs there are empty seats.

This gave rise to a discussion about the general involvement of other interest groups in the RACs, who should be heard when there are consultation processes etc, and back to the 2/3-1/3 distribution as opposed to a 50-50 split. No conclusions drawn from this.

MEDRAC (Giampaolo Buonfiglio): mentioned the proposed aquaculture AC and the proposed markets RAC and that fact that they can't all have the same structure of 2/3-1/3 - it will have to be different. Maybe there could be a derogation from these rules. To the first point of agenda – “yes” absolutely – we must be involved. Problem is not yes or how, but what will be the future role of the ACs. But before we say yes to everything, we have to enter into a discussion with the COM. He referred to a presentation that the COM had recently made to the MEDRAC on the future role of the AC. We can be very happy about the new strong role of the RACs, but we're not in a position to live up to it (e.g. on scientific participation or control issues).

LDRAC (Juan Manuel Liria) also wanted to have a different composition because the LDRAC was representing 24 countries. The LDRAC finds all suggested new functions of the RACs very interesting. But it depends on time, money, structure, collaboration with the scientists etc. This could be the real function of the ACs, and this is not the reality right now.

SWWRAC (Monica Verbeek) will have questions to the technical measures and how they see the role of the ACs. She will emphasise the importance of the RACs. The SWWRAC has sent in its opinion on the future role and composition of the ACs. They also want to hear what the COM is asking and what the timing will be. For example, when will the aquaculture RAC be up and running?

There was a general discussion about funding and whether there would be more money available to cover all the RACs now being proposed. But there was general agreement to the different characteristics of the RACs. Not everyone thought that it was a good idea for the RACs to have different budget levels. The NWWRAC said that all the RACs are different and we should look at their specificities: however, there is a need to keep the operational grant for all as minimum, and have access to additional funding to develop specific projects / actions from other sources e.g. from the EMFF or FP7, Interreg... We should not be competing among the RACs for resources that are already scarce but look for sources of funding that allow us to enhance our advisory role and become an actor in regionalised CFP. It was understood that an increase in the operational grant is not expected for the RACs. And what about the proposed RAC for the outermost regions? Niki Sporrang thought it logical to include aquaculture in all the RACs, rather than having its own RAC. Niels Wichmann suggested asking about what will become of the ACFA budget.

Summary by Carlos: We're all expecting something from the COM tomorrow. The COM has to give us more. We asked for a workshop to discuss this subject. Every RAC has its own characteristics and should be treated that way.

3. From the SWWRAC

Technical conservation measures (and discards ban). Can the EU define a clearer mandate for the RACs since they have been identified as a key player for these regulations? [Background from the SWWRAC: The EU has contracted the consultancy company MRAG to have a clearer framework for the coming technical conservation measures draft regulation. So MRAG should work with the RACs]

Monica Verbeek reiterated that it would be good for the RACs to have a clearer mandate on the technical measures. It's not clear where the RACs come in on this. Niels Wichmann raised the discard ban and the revision of the technical measures regulation. A discard ban will soon apply to the Skagerrak – and the NS

RAC has not been formally consulted on this and has complained. So it was indeed a very fair question to ask the COM what the role of the ACs is here. No more comments, but general agreement to this.

4. From the PELRAC

RAC involvement in research projects – in the light of recent experience with the two FP7 applications TEMPO and MARFRAME. [It's course up to each RAC to decide about participation. RACs might all have the same concerns and experiences. And a common strategy in the future might be very useful]

Verena Ohms wanted to hear the experience from the different RACs. Should we establish rules on this and how do we ensure we get the resources for this? The BSRAC gave its experience on this, on being taken as a hostage in project applications. The RACs are not scientific bodies, but stakeholder bodies. SWWRAC had had a disappointing experience with its own project proposal and had trouble finding funding for it – then the idea got copied and turned into a COM tender which the RAC couldn't apply for. The NSRAC has a different view and are very eager to be part of research projects. It is inundated with requests to participate in projects. The NSRAC is not trying to limit its role to being a provider of advice.

It was agreed that the secretariats will prepare something on how to deal with applications made by consortia/project leaders and to share this with everyone.

5. From the BSRAC

What happened at the Advisory Board meeting with the EFCA on 21st February 2013

Sally Clink gave an update on the meeting in Vigo. All the RACs were preoccupied by the discards ban. The Agency was also following this issue and reflecting on what to do. The Agency presented the European Parliament legislative resolution of 6th February 2013 on the CFP Basic regulation and highlighted three amendments which include reference to the EFCA and potential greater involvement of the Agency¹ The

¹ ([Amendment 163](#))

– where it says that the Union *assisted by the European Fisheries Control Agency* shall cooperate with third countries and international organizations dealing with fisheries, including RFMOs, to strengthen compliance

This could be way of supporting the COM and MS e.g. in negotiations with RFMOs, developing an information system for improving monitoring of certain activities, and to fight IUU in a more operational way.

See 243 – a new Article 46a

Setting up of a “compliance committee” and to include reps of all MS, COM and Control Agency – and what to do

Maybe the industry would want to be represented on this Committee?

See 273 – Article 57a

To amend an established regulation 768/2005 – to say that the EFCA shall be the operational body designated for the exchange of data in electronic form and for enhanced maritime surveillance capacity.

This last one could be very controversial - but EFCA appreciate it – it could be a way for the Agency to be more efficient.

So there are some possible new tasks for the EFCA resulting from these three amendments. And there are many possibilities. From these amendment the RACs could succeed in having more involvement in the monitoring of the implementation of the CFP.

Agency will be holding a seminar on 26th-28th June 2013 in Vigo for the compliance evaluation meeting to present its findings on compliance and infringements and to have an exchange of views on the way ahead. Before the European Seafood Exhibition on 22nd April there will be an afternoon hearing in the European Parliament on control issues.

AOB

Carlos (LDRAC) raised the issue of review of access regime for deep sea fisheries and the phasing out of deep-sea trawling/bottom gillnetting. He referred to the COM consultation paper launched in December 2009 – it applied only to EU waters and the LDRAC was not involved. But then came the proposal of Regulation in July 2012 that included a bottom trawling ban in international waters as well - so the LDRAC felt excluded from the consultation process. He would like to organize a workshop on this issue soon (end March) and involve international organisations (FAO, RFMOs etc). The aim was for an exchange of views and maybe as outcome a recommendation. The EP Fisheries Committee is expected to vote on the proposal at the end of May and at plenary at the end of June. The NWWRAC has been actively involved in the process by coordinating the organisation of a Joint RAC Focus Group in November 2012 and contributing to the drafting of a discussion paper, However, the NWWRAC is not sure about the purpose of organising a high profile seminar at this stage given the confronting views existing within the RACs between the industry and NGOs and as it is not certain what would be the output from the process. The SWWRAC thought a seminar would give all the chance to exchange arguments. There was agreement on the lack of transparency and lack of consultation of the RACs.

Niels (NSRAC) talked about an exchange he had had with Olivier Baudalet on administrative matters. The NSRAC has written a note on experiences so far on running the RAC. He will bring this up under any other business and suggest the creation of a focus group to discuss this. The key is flexibility. The NWWRAC pointed out that it had had its difficulties which it had resolved, and doesn't want to be grouped together in a joint initiative.

NB: Order of chairing and rapporteurship

2013: LD/BS

2014: BS/MED

2015: MED/NSRAC